

REMARKS

The Applicant gratefully acknowledges allowance of claims 52 and 53 and potential allowability of claims 26, 28, 30 to 32, 35, 37, 38, 43, 46 to 48, 50 and 51.

The present patent application now comprises twenty-eight (28) claims, numbered 17, 18, 22 to 28, 30, 32, 34, 35, 37, 38, 42, 43, 45, 46 and 48 to 56.

Claim 17 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 29 and 31, which are now cancelled. Claim 45 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 47, which is now cancelled. Claims 30 and 32 have been amended to change their dependency. Claims 29, 31 and 47 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1 to 16, 19 to 21, 33, 36, 39 to 41 and 44 were previously cancelled. New claims 54 to 56 have been added.

Support for amendments made can be found throughout the specification and drawings as originally filed. It is believed that no new matter has been added to the present patent application by the present amendment.

1. Rejection of claims under 35 USC 102 and 35 USC 103, and allowable subject matter

On pages 2 to 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 17, 18, 23, 24, 27, 29, 34, 40, 42, 45 and 49 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 2,041,103 to Zegers (hereinafter referred to as "Zegers"). The Examiner also rejected claims 17 and 25 as being anticipated by European Patent Application Publication 1079104 to Paciello. The Examiner also rejected claim 22 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zegers.

Now, on page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 31 and 47 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the elements of their respective base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 17 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 29 and 31, which are now cancelled.

Claim 45 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 47, which is now cancelled.

In view of the Examiner's remarks regarding allowability of claims 31 and 47, it is respectfully submitted that claims 17 and 45 as amended are in condition for allowance.

Claims 18, 22 to 25, 27, 34 and 42 depend on claim 17 and are thus also believed to be in condition for allowance. Claim 49 depends on claim 45 and is thus also believed to be in condition for allowance. The Examiner's rejections of claims 29 and 40 are moot in view of cancellation of these claims.

2. Patentability of new claims 54 to 56

On page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 28 and 37 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the elements of their respective base claim and any intervening claims.

New claim 54 corresponds to the subject matter of former claims 17 and 37.

New claim 56 corresponds to the subject matter of former claims 17 and 28.

In view of the Examiner's remarks regarding allowability of claims 28 and 37, it is respectfully submitted that new claims 54 and 56 are in condition for allowance. New claim 55 depends on claim 54 is thus also believed to be in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Claims 17, 18, 22 to 28, 30, 32, 34, 35, 37, 38, 42, 43, 45, 46 and 48 to 56 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is requested. Early allowance of the present patent application is earnestly solicited.

If the application is not considered to be in full condition for allowance, for any reason, the Applicant respectfully requests the constructive assistance and suggestions of the Examiner in drafting one or more acceptable claims pursuant to MPEP 707.07(j) or in making constructive suggestions pursuant to MPEP 706.03 so that the application can be placed in allowable condition as soon as possible and without the need for further proceedings.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date: October 26, 2007